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SALT Battle Apparently Has Started

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The battle over Senate ratification of a proposed strategic arms limitation treaty (SALT) seems to have started already.

A report in yesterday's New York Times described the resignation of a Central Intelligence Agency analyst who leaked secret information about allegedly deceptive Soviet intentions to an aide to Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), who has criticized some SALT proposals.

David S. Sullivan, the analyst, gave the material to Jackson aide Richard Perle because he feared his four-year study of the present arms treaty and negotiations would be suppressed by the CIA, according to a source who would be identified only as a friend of Sullivan's.

Sullivan could not be reached directly for comment.

The 35-year-old Sullivan went to work for Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D-Tex.) shortly after leaving the CIA in late August. A spokesman for Bentsen said the senator was aware of the incident, but was satisfied that Sullivan had done nothing illegal.

Perle has top security clearances, and Sullivan has received top-secret Pentagon and Department of Energy clearances for his new job, the Bentsen spokesman said.

Sullivan also has received CIA permission to publish an unclassified version of his study, the spokesman added. It is said to conclude the Soviets continually have deceived the United States on SALT.

The American Committee on East-West Accord, an advocate of a SALT treaty, issued a statement yesterday criticizing Sullivan's reported action. "Selective leaks and misinformation can scuttle the president's efforts to bring the strategic arms race under control," co-director Carl Marcy said.

Marcy agreed it was possible that pro-SALT forces within the administration had leaked the story about Sullivan's anti-SALT leak to Jackson's aide. "You can expect leaks" from both sides, Marcy said.

The CIA, as usual, had no comment on the matter. A Justice Department spokesman said there was no sign the CIA had asked the department to consider prosecuting Sullivan. It is not clear that any statute would apply.

The CIA wasted no time asking the Justice Department to take action against Frank Snepp, a former officer who published a critical book—containing no classified information—without clearing it first with the agency.

Administration officials are in the final phase of negotiations with the Soviets on a new agreement to limit nuclear weapons. Any treaty is expected to face critical questioning by Jackson and others in the Senate approval process.